(b) whether the Government plan to take the help of international experts and private caterers; and

(c) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Improvement in the catering and other on board train services has been taken up as a mission area and detailed specifications for menu, packaging, presentation and services have been standardised in the case of catering services in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and other long distance Mail/Express trains. Thalis have been phased out from the catering services in trains as they are not considered hygienic and instead food is being served in casserole packs where quality is maintained.

(b) and (c) Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation has been set up which will take up the upgradation and standardisation of on board services in trains. Experts from the professional institutes are also being consulted for upgrading the service.

Introduction of Express Trains between Rourkela and Allahabad and Bilaspur and Patna

505. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to introduce an Express train between Rourkela and Allahabad and another between Bilaspur and Patna;

(b) whether the above proposal is going to be implemented during the current financial year; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Train Accident

506. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ANIL SHARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of serious train accidents which took place from 1st January, 1998 to 31st August, 1999.

(b) how many of them have been inquired into by the Commissioner of Railway Safety so far; and

(c) what are the reasons for not disposing of the remaining cases?